

Message Text

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ORIGIN INR-07

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEA-10 SSM-03 IO-13 OC-06 CCO-00
CIAE-00 NSC-05 DODE-00 /045 R

DRAFTED BY INR/RNA/NE:HRSINDELAR:CA
APPROVED BY INR/RNA:PHSTODDARD
SSM-CWKONTOS
DESIRED DISTRIBUTION
SSM

-----003016 100402Z /14

P 100208Z DEC 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USMISSION SINAI PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DOHA PRIORITY
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY
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AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY
TREASURY PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652:XGDS-2

TAGS:EG, IS, PINR

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SUBJECT: INTSUM 460 , DECEMBER 9, 1977
LONDON FOR KINSOLVING; PARIS FOR NICHOLAS MURPHY; OTHER
ADDEES FOR CHIEFS OF MISSION
NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS

1. EGYPT. BASED ON SADAT'S LATEST PUBLIC AND PRIVATE
COMMENTS, IT APPEARS HE IS TRYING TO ESTABLISH SEPARATE
TRACKS FOR NEGOTIATIONS--EACH QUITE DISTINCT FROM THE
OTHER--BUT ALL FORMING A SINGLE NETWORK OF DISCUSSIONS
THAT EVENTUALLY WILL MEET AT THE COMMON CONJUNCTION OF A

COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT. THE EGYPTIANS WOULD THUS BE ABLE TO SET THE PACE AND FORCE THE MORE RELUCTANT PARTIES TO FOLLOW.

2. THIS IS A HIGH-RISK VENTURE, FOR ONLY MEANINGFUL ISRAEL CONCESSIONS ON ALL FRONTS WOULD ALLOW EGYPT THE OPPORTUNITY TO BRING ALONG THE OTHERS. THE ISRAELIS MAY TRY TO TEMPT SADAT INTO A SEPARATE DEAL WITH THE PROSPECT OF RECOVERING THE SINAI AND THIS TEMPTATION WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO RESIST, ESPECIALLY WHEN SET IN OPPOSITION TO HOLDING OUT FOR CONCESSIONS FOR SYRIA AND THE PALESTINIANS. IN ORDER TO PRESS HIS CASE, SADAT IS PROBABLY RELYING HEAVILY ON THREE PRINCIPAL PLAYERS,

THE SAUDIS, THE ISRAELIS, AND THE US, ALL OF WHOM HE PERCEIVES AS HAVING ACQUIRED A HEAVY STAKE IN HIS SUCCESS.

3. THE SAUDIS HAVE A SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP WITH CAIRO. SADAT'S ACTIONS FORCE THEM TO CHOOSE BETWEEN (A) SEEING SADAT THROUGH TO THE END OF WHAT MANY SAUDIS STILL SEE AS HIS FOLLY AND (B) WITHDRAWING THEIR SUPPORT AND RISKING HIS REPLACEMENT BY A MORE RADICAL REGIME THAT
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COULD CAUSE SOME DISUNITY AMONG THE ARABS, BUT THE LATTER WOULD TIP THE BALANCE OF POWER IN THE ARAB WORLD IN FAVOR OF THE RADICAL, ANTI-SAUDI ARABS. TO ENABLE THE SAUDIS TO SUPPORT SADAT AND, MORE IMPORTANT, TO RETAIN ENOUGH INFLUENCE IN DAMASCUS TO NUDGE THE SYRIANS TOWARD MODERATION, THE ISRAELIS WILL HAVE TO BE FORTHCOMING IN SAUDI EYES.

4. SADAT HAS PRESSED HIS ARAB BROTHERS VERY HARD TO COMMIT THEMSELVES OPENLY TO A MEANINGFUL COMPROMISE PEACE SETTLEMENT. WE EXPECT THAT HE WILL BE AT LEAST AS FORCEFUL WITH THE ISRAELIS. SADAT PROBABLY CALCULATES THAT IF BEGIN PROVES UNWILLING TO BE FORTHCOMING, BEGIN WOULD HAVE DIFFICULTY JUSTIFYING HIS HARD LINE BOTH TO THE ISRAELIS AND TO THE AMERICAN PUBLIC.

5. IN THE MEANTIME, SADAT IS LIKELY TO USE HIS NEW DIRECT CHANNELS TO TRY TO CONVINCE THE ISRAELIS THAT THEY CANNOT HAVE A BILATERAL SETTLEMENT WITHOUT FIRST SEEKING A COMPROMISE SETTLEMENT. HE WILL HOPE THAT THE ISRAELIS WILL REALIZE THAT ONLY A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT WITH SOMETHING FOR SYRIA AND THE PLO WILL GIVE THEM SECURITY AND JUSTIFY THE RISKS THAT HE HAS TAKEN. WE BELIEVE THAT HE CONSIDERS A BILATERAL SETTLEMENT AS A FALLBACK POSITION IN AN EGYPTIAN ATTEMPT TO SALVAGE HIS INITIATIVE. (MANY EGYPTIAN LEADERS HAVE FELT FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS THAT THEY COULD HAVE A BILATERAL AGREEMENT

WITH ISRAEL AT ANY TIME.)

6. THE US, IN SADAT'S VIEW, HAS BEEN UNWILLING TO USE ITS INFLUENCE WITH ISRAEL. HE IS UNDOUBTEDLY COUNTING ON WASHINGTON'S BEING EMBOLDENED NOW BY THE PROSPECT OF MIDDLE EAST PEACE ON THE ONE HAND, OR A RISE OF ARAB RADICALISM SHOULD HE FAIL, ON THE OTHER. (SECRET/NOFORN)

7. AFTER MORE THAN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS SILENCE ON EGYPT'S
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CLOSURE OF SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN CONSULATES AND CULTURAL CENTERS, MOSCOW'S INITIAL PUBLIC REACTION YESTERDAY WAS MILD AND RESTRAINED. IN A TONE SEEMINGLY MEANT TO SUGGEST MORE SORROW THAN ANGER RADIO MOSCOW'S ARABIC SERVICE:

--DENIED EGYPTIAN CHARGES THAT THE CENTERS HAD BEEN INTERFERING IN EGYPT'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS;

--TERMED THE MOVE THE "LATEST EGYPTIAN UNFRIENDLY ACT" AGAINST THE USSR; AND

--SAID SADAT'S ACTION WAS AIMED AT A FURTHER "WORSENING" OF SOVIET-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS.

HUNGARIAN AND GDR COMMENT WAS SIMILARLY RESTRAINED, BULGARIA ONLY NOTED THE FACT OF THE CLOSURE, AND THERE HAS SO FAR BEEN NO COMMENT FROM THE POLES.

8. THE ISRAELI MEDIA CONTINUES TO ABOUND WITH REPORTS OF SECRET ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN MEETINGS, EITHER UNDERWAY OR SOON TO CONVENE ACCORDING TO EMBASSY TEL AVIV. JERUSALEM TV REPORTED LATE WEDNESDAY THAT "UNPUBLICIZED NEGOTIATIONS" BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL STARTED "A FEW DAYS AGO", INCLUDING AT "SENIOR LEVELS". DAYAN HAS BEEN MENTIONED BY SEVERAL PAPERS AS BEING INVOLVED; TWO PAPERS SAID HE WOULD MEET PRIVATELY WITH SADAT "SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE EAST" WHILE THE CAIRO CONFERENCE WAS IN PROGRESS. THE CAIRO TALKS WOULD BE A "SMOKESCREEN" TO DIVERT PUBLIC ATTENTION FROM THESE PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS. MAARIVE QUOTED ISRAEL'S RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS MINISTER AS SAYING ISRAEL HAS BEEN NEGOTIATING IN SECRET WITH EGYPT FOR FIVE MONTHS.

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9. IN A STATEMENT WELCOMING HUSSEIN, SADAT YESTERDAY DISMISSED ARAB OPPONENTS OF HIS PEACE INITIATIVES AS "DWARFS." HUSSEIN ARRIVED IN CAIRO TO ATTEMPT TO MEDIATE THE DISPUTE BETWEEN EGYPT AND SYRIA. SADAT ALSO LASHED

OUT AT THE "DEFEATIST SPIRIT" OF PALESTINIAN LEADERS WHO HAVE REJECTED HIS PROPOSALS.

10. IN A CONVERSATION WITH EMBASSY JIDDA, SAUDI DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER MANSOURI SAID THAT SAUDI ARABIA WOULD ACCEPT, AS A FINAL PEACE SETTLEMENT, WHATEVER THE PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT ACCEPTED. THERE IS ONE EXCEPTION, HOWEVER. SAUDI ARABIA HAS ITS OWN POSITION ON JERUSALEM AND WOULD NOT AGREE TO ANY SOLUTION THAT DID NOT PROVIDE FOR THE RE-ARABIZATION OF THE OLD CITY. IN MANSOURI'S VIEW, THE CONCEPT OF MAKING SAUDI ARABIA THE SUPERVISOR OF THE MUSLIM HOLY PLACES IN JERUSALEM WOULD NOT SATISFY THE SAUDI LEADERSHIP.

11. IN A SOLEMN CEREMONY AT THE NORTHERN-MOST UNEF SINAI POST, EGYPT RETURNED TO ISRAEL THE BODIES OF THREE SOLDIERS KILLED DURING THE 1973 WAR. REPORTERS ATTENDING THE CEREMONY INCLUDED SIX ISRAELI JOURNALISTS STATIONED TEMPORARILY IN CARIO. (CONFIDENTIAL)

12. PALESTINIANS. CAIRO RADIO REPORTED THAT A WEST BANK DELEGATION OF 100 IS DUE TO ARRIVE IN CAIRO TODAY TO EXPRESS THEIR SUPPORT FOR SADAT AND HIS INITIATIVES. JERUSALEM RADIO NOTED THAT THREE WEST BANK DELEGATIONS FROM LARGE TOWNS WERE FORMING TO GO TO CAIRO. (PRESUMABLY, CAIRO RADIO IS TREATING THESE THREE GROUPS AS ONE LARGE DELEGATION.) MOST DELEGATION MEMBERS, HOWEVER, LIKELY LACK MUCH POLITICAL CLOUT ON THE WEST BANK. AS OUR JERUSALEM CONSULATE GENERAL OBSERVED, RESPECTED NATIONALISTIC AND MODERATE LEADERS WOULD REFUSE TO GO TO CAIRO AT THIS TIME. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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13. KUWAIT. EMBASSY KUWAIT COMMENTED THAT, AS INTER-ARAB CONSULTATIONS INTENSIFY IN AN EFFORT TO BRIDGE THE SADAT-ASSAD GAP, THE KUWAIT GOVERNMENT WILL LIKELY MAINTAIN A STAND PAT POSITION AND SEEK TO DEFUSE WHATEVER INTERNAL PROBLEMS MIGHT BE ENGENDERED DUE TO KUWAIT'S LARGE PALESTINIAN POPULATION. OFFICIAL KUWAIT SENTIMENT PRIVATELY CONTINUES TO FAVOR SADAT'S INITIATIVES, BUT THE KUWAITIS REMAIN DEEPLY WORRIED OVER THE EFFECTS ON ARAB UNITY. THUS, THEY ARE LIKELY TO STEER A MIDDLE ROAD IN SESSIONS WITH THE PROTAGONISTS, WHILE WORKING QUIETLY BEHIND THE SCENES WITH THE SAUDIS. (CONFIDENTIAL)

14. GREAT BRITAIN. THE BRITISH AEROSPACE DYNAMICS GROUP ANNOUNCED YESTERDAY THAT IT HAS SIGNED AN ARMS DEAL WITH THE ARAB ORGANIZATION FOR INDUSTRIALIZATION (AOI) FOR PRODUCTION OF THE LONG-RANGE "SWINGFIRE" ANTI-TANK MISSILE. THE DEAL IS REPORTEDLY WORTH \$73 MILLION. THIS IS REPORTEDLY THE FIRST IN WHAT BRITISH ARMS MANUFACTURERS HOPE WILL BE A LONG-TERM PROGRAM TO REFUR-

BISH THE EGYPTIAN ARMY WITH WESTERN ARMS.
(UNCLASSIFIED)

15. EGYPT-BUDGET. REUTER CITED A STATEMENT YESTERDAY IN CAIRO BY THE EGYPTIAN FINANCE MINISTER THAT EGYPT WOULD SPEND 1.5 BILLION DOLLARS ON DEFENSE NEXT YEAR IN A TOTAL PROJECTED BUDGET OF 16.5 BILLION DOLLARS. AL-AHRAM REPORTED THAT IN THIS YEAR'S 10.5 BILLION DOLLAR BUDGET, 1.3 BILLION DOLLARS WAS ALLOCATED FOR DEFENSE.
(UNCLASSIFIED)

16. MINI-SUMMIT. THE QATARI NEWSPAPER AL-ARAB QUOTED INFORMED SOURCES IN AMMAN AS SAYING THAT "INTENSIVE
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EFFORTS" ARE UNDERWAY TO CONVENE A FIVE-PARTY SUMMIT-- EGYPT, SYRIA, JORDAN, SAUDI ARABIA AND THE PLO--IN SAUDI ARABIA. HUSSEIN AND KHALID WERE SAID TO BE PLAYING A MAJOR ROLE IN THIS EFFORT. (UNCLASSIFIED)

17. LEBANON. REUTER REPORTED THAT ABOUT A DOZEN ARTILLERY SHELLS WERE FIRED YESTERDAY FROM THE LEFTIST AND PALESTINIAN-HELD VILLAGE OF TAYYIBAH TOWARD RIGHTIST POSITIONS SOUTHWEST OF MARJAYOUN. ACCORDING TO REUTER, THE RIGHTISTS DID NOT RESPOND. NO REPORTS OF CASUALTIES WERE RECEIVED AND NO WOUNDED WERE BROUGHT TO THE ISRAELI FIRST AID POST AT THE BORDER. REUTER SAID THIS WAS THE THIRD SHELLING THIS WEEK IN THE AREA. (UNCLASSIFIED)
CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 22-Sep-1999 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION, MONITORING FACILITIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 10-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE295097
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: INR/RNA/NE:HRSINDELAR:CA
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 XGDS-2
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
Film Number: D770459-1178
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197712111/baaaaeupx.tel
Line Count: 251
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 9df45dfc-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN INR
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 119344
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INTSUM 460 , DECEMBER 9, 1977
TAGS: PINR, MARR, EG, IS
To: SINAI INFO ABU DHABI MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9df45dfc-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009